



# Glossary of Cruise Ship Lingo and Words (A to Z)

- **AFT:** The rear or back part of the inside of the ship.
- **Anytime Dining:** Also known as “Your Time Dining,” is an arrangement that allows you to eat your meals at any time during dining hours instead of scheduled seating times.
- **Back-to-Back (B2B):** When you book one cruise after another on the same ship when one cruise ends and the other begins.
- **Berth:** Refers to a bed on the ship or the ship’s docking location at port.
- **Bow:** The very front of the ship.
- **Bridge:** The ship’s control center or navigation room, where the captain and crew command the vessel.
- **Buffet:** A casual dining option on a cruise ship offering a wide range of options during breakfast, lunch, and dinner options. It’s self-service and usually included in the cruise fare.
- **Bulkhead:** A vertical partition wall within the ship, providing structural support and compartmentalization.
- **Cabin Category:** The classification of staterooms based on size, location, and amenities, from interior cabins to luxury suites.
- **Cabin or Stateroom:** Your room on the ship can vary from interior rooms without windows to suites with large balconies.
- **Cabin Steward or Stateroom Attendant:** Maintains the cleanliness and orderliness of passenger cabins, providing daily housekeeping services.
- **Captain:** The highest-ranking officer on the ship, responsible for all operations, including navigation and safety. The captain has the final authority on board. The CEO of the cruise ship.
- **Chef’s Table:** An exclusive dining experience offering a multi-course meal prepared and presented by the ship’s chef. It usually requires a reservation and an additional fee.
- **Chief Engineer:** The engineering department maintains and operates the ship’s mechanical and electrical systems.
- **Closed Loop Sailing:** When a cruise starts and returns to the same port.
- **Cruise Agent:** A travel professional or agency specializing in booking cruise vacations.
- **Cruise Card or Seapass Card:** A personalized ID card is given to passengers upon boarding as a room key, onboard payment, and identification for disembarking and reembarkeing at ports.

- **Cruise Director:** Responsible for all onboard entertainment and activities. The cruise director plans and coordinates events and announcements, playing a key role in the cruise experience.
- **Cruise Ducks:** A fun tradition among passengers who hide and seek small rubber ducks around the ship for others to find.
- **Cruise newbies:** They're what we call first-time beginner cruises.
- **Cruiser:** Another way to say a passenger on a cruise ship vessel.
- **Deck Plan:** A map showing the ship's layout, including cabins, public areas, and amenities, to help passengers navigate.
- **Deckhands:** Perform various tasks related to the maintenance and operation of the ship, including cleaning and minor repairs.
- **Disembarkation:** The saddest day of a cruise vacation. The process of leaving the ship at the end of the cruise.
- **Embarkation:** The process of boarding the ship at the beginning of your cruise. You could consider it a happy day because it's cruise vacation day #1.
- **Entertainment Deck:** Home to the ship's theaters, cinemas, nightclubs, and lounges, this deck is the heart of nighttime entertainment.
- **Expedition Ships:** Designed for adventurous travelers, expedition ships are equipped for exploring remote and off-the-beaten-path destinations, such as polar regions and exotic islands.
- **First Officer:** Also known as the Chief Mate, this individual is second-in-command and assists the captain in ship navigation and operations.
- **Fixed Seating:** Assigned dining times and tables for the duration of the cruise, offering a consistent dining schedule and tablemates.
- **Forward (FWD):** Refers to the area or direction towards the vessel's front end.
- **Freestyle Cruising:** A flexible cruising style with no set dining times or seating arrangements and a relaxed dress code. This phrase is synonymous with Norwegian Cruise Line as the originator of freestyle cruising.
- **Galley:** The ship's kitchen where all the food preparation happens. Some cruises offer galley tours.
- **Gangplank:** A movable bridge passengers and crew use to board or disembark from a ship.
- **Gangway:** The entrance or exit ramp is used by passengers to board or leave the ship.
- **Gratuity:** A daily tip for cruise staff, often automatically added to your onboard account, acknowledging their service.
- **Guaranteed Cabin (GTY):** Cruise lines offer this booking option for a discounted rate where the passenger secures a cabin within a specific category or type at the time of booking. The exact cabin number is not assigned until closer to the sailing date.
- **Guest Services or Relations:** The ship's customer service desk is where passengers can inquire about accounts, lost items, and other services.
- **Helm:** The ship's steering apparatus or area from where the ship is navigated.

- **Hotel Director:** Oversees all hotel services on the ship, including accommodations, dining, and entertainment, ensuring passengers' comfort and satisfaction.
- **Inside Cabin:** A windowless cabin on the ship. Usually the most budget-friendly cabin.
- **Itinerary:** The cruise schedule detailing the ship's travel plans includes ports-of-call and sea days.
- **Knot:** A unit of speed equal to one nautical mile per hour used to measure the speed of a ship.
- **Life Jackets:** Personal flotation devices are provided in each cabin for every passenger. Familiarizing yourself with how to wear it correctly is a key safety measure.
- **Lifeboats:** Small boats carried on the ship are used during an emergency evacuation. Knowing how to locate and access lifeboats is essential.
- **Lido Deck:** Often the hub of outdoor activities on the ship, the Lido deck is where you'll find the main pool area, sun loungers, and sometimes, outdoor bars and buffets.
- **Logbook:** An official record of the bridge, documenting the course of the journey, important events, and operational notes.
- **Luxury Ships:** High-end cruise ships offer unparalleled service, amenities, and accommodations, catering to discerning travelers with refined tastes.
- **Main Dining Room (MDR):** The ship's primary dining area, offering seated dining with various menu options, often included in your cruise fare. Sometimes, there is more than one main dining room.
- **Mega Ships:** Largest cruise ships worldwide, offering extensive amenities and entertainment options for thousands of passengers. Some of them are like theme parks at sea.
- **Midship (MID):** The middle area of the ship is often used to describe cabin locations.
- **Mooring:** Securing the ship at a dock or berth with ropes or anchors.
- **Muster Drill:** A mandatory exercise for all passengers and crew conducted at the beginning of the voyage to practice emergency procedures.
- **Muster Station:** Previously defined, this term refers to a designated area where passengers gather during a ship's emergency drill. Understanding your muster station is crucial for safety.
- **Nautical Mile:** A measure of distance used in maritime navigation, equivalent to 1.1508 miles or 1.852 kilometers.
- **Naughty Room:** This is where you'll find your luggage if prohibited items are packed.
- **Observation Deck:** Located at the top of the ship, the observation deck offers the best unobstructed views of the ocean and the ship's surroundings, making it the perfect spot for sightseeing and photography.
- **Obstructed View:** When lifeboats or ship structures partially block a view from a cabin, you do not get a full ocean view.
- **Oceanview (OV):** A cabin featuring a window or porthole for ocean views.

- **Onboard Credit (OBC):** Prepaid amount that is sometimes given to passengers by a promotion, agent, or cruise line to use onboard towards their bill.
- **One Uppers:** Cruisers that brag about the many cruises they've taken and their loyalty status.
- **Passenger:** That would be you, the cruiser, on a cruise ship.
- **Pier Runner:** A passenger who returns to the ship at the last possible moment before departure, often seen running down the pier to avoid being left behind.
- **Pool Deck:** Similar to the Lido deck, this area is focused on the ship's swimming pools and accompanying leisure facilities, including hot tubs and poolside bars.
- **Port of Call:** A port-of-call is a stop a cruise ship makes on its itinerary, where passengers can disembark to explore the destination. Also known as port destination.
- **Portside:** The ship's left side, facing forward towards the bow.
- **Promenade Deck:** This deck usually features a wide, outdoor walking area around the ship, perfect for a stroll with ocean views. The promenade might include shops, cafes, and other social spaces.
- **Purser:** Handles administrative tasks, including passenger services such as billing and customer inquiries. The Purser's Desk is the go-to place for guest assistance.
- **Quartermaster:** A crew member responsible for steering the ship and assisting with its navigation.
- **River Cruises:** Smaller vessels designed for navigating rivers, offering scenic voyages through picturesque landscapes and visits to historic towns and cultural sites along riverbanks.
- **Room Service:** Food and beverages can be ordered and delivered directly to your cabin. Some items and times may be free, while others incur a charge.
- **Sail Away Party:** As the cruise sails from port on embarkation day, there is usually a huge celebration on the pool deck.
- **Sea Day:** A day during the cruise when the ship does not dock at a port, allowing guests to enjoy the onboard amenities.
- **Sea Legs:** The ability to adjust to the ship's motion and walk steadily onboard. "Finding your sea legs" means you've adapted to the movement and no longer feel unsteady.
- **Seasoned Cruiser:** Someone with extensive experience taking multiple cruises is familiar with the nuances of cruise travel.
- **Ship:** a vessel designed for maritime navigation across oceans and large bodies of water, capable of carrying people and cargo long distances. You can fit boats inside a ship, but not vice versa.
- **Shipfaced:** A cheeky term for someone who has enjoyed perhaps a bit too much of the ship's bar offerings.
- **Shipspotting:** Watching and taking photos of cruise ships.
- **Shore Excursion:** Organized tours or activities in the port cities where the ship docks.

- **Shore Excursion Desk:** The place onboard where passengers can book and inquire about guided tours and activities at the upcoming ports of call.
- **Spa Deck:** Typically housing the ship's spa and fitness center, this deck is about relaxation and rejuvenation, offering treatments, massages, and fitness classes.
- **Specialty Dining:** Onboard restaurants offering gourmet or special cuisine not covered by the cruise fare often require reservations and cost an additional fee.
- **Sports Deck:** Dedicated to physical activities, the sports deck may include jogging tracks, miniature golf courses, basketball courts, and other sports facilities.
- **Staff Captain:** Often responsible for safety and security aboard the ship, including overseeing the crew involved in these areas.
- **Stern:** The back or aft-most part of the exterior of the ship.
- **Sun Deck:** As the name suggests, this is an open deck area designed for sunbathing, offering plenty of loungers and, often, panoramic sea views.
- **Tender:** A small boat transporting passengers from the ship to the shore when the ship cannot dock at the port directly.
- **The Suite Life:** The luxury experience of staying in a suite cabin on a cruise ship, offering VIP treatment, personalized service, and exclusive amenities.
- **Theme Cruise Ships:** Specialized ships catering to specific interests or themes, such as culinary cruises, music-themed cruises, or wellness retreats, offering tailored experiences for enthusiasts.
- **Towel Animal:** The art of folding towels into various animal shapes is a fun and creative touch the cabin attendant may add to your cabin decor during turn-down service. Unfortunately, most cruise lines have stopped making towel animals, but Carnival Cruise Lines continues the tradition.
- **Veranda or Balcony:** A private balcony attached to a cabin where you can step outside for ocean views, port views, and fresh salty air.
- **Washy-washy:** A fun phrase that reminds passengers to wash and disinfect their hands.
- **Wave Season:** Refers to the time of year (usually January through March) when many people book their cruises, prompted by cold weather in the Northern Hemisphere and the cruise lines offering attractive deals and promotions.
- **Windjammer:** Often the name for the buffet restaurant on Royal Caribbean cruise ships, providing various food options in a casual setting.
- **Windward:** The direction from which the wind is coming. Opposite of leeward.
- **Yacht Cruises:** Small, luxurious yachts offering exclusive and customized itineraries to exotic destinations, providing an intimate and upscale sailing experience.

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